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# ANIMAL CONTROL NEWSLETTER

## Town of Sterling - December 2016

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### *Holiday Safety Tips!*

**Danger! Pets may try to sneak out...**the open door as company comes in. When you know family or friends are coming over, play it safe and put pets in another room, preferably with the door closed or in a crate. If crate trained, keep them there until all company arrives and is settled in. Once everyone is settled, allow pets to join in.

**Food danger** There are a lot of food dangers for pets this time of year so be careful! People tend to use grapes and raisins a lot in their main dishes, but beware, both grapes and raisins can make your pets very sick. Guests may leave food dishes in areas where pets can get to them (like wastebaskets or coffee tables). Be safe and post an area with "please put dirty dishes here" and keep food dangers away from your pets.

**Chocolate Dangers** Chocolate contains theobromine, an xanthine compound which is in the same family as caffeine and theophylline and is toxic to dogs in large doses. Xanthenes affect the nervous system and cardiovascular system primarily. Symptoms of toxicity include hyper excitability, increased heart rate, restlessness, increased urination, muscle tremors, vomiting, diarrhea and in extreme cases, even death. The toxic dose for cats is even lower than for dogs, however, there is less chance of this happening to cats as they are unable to taste sweetness.

**Danger with ice melts & anti-freeze** can occur as pets lick themselves to clean their paws causing a toxic reaction to these chemicals. Pet owners should store ice melts & anti-freeze out of pets reach and wipe their pets' paws after they have been outside.

**Emergency veterinarians open 24/7:**

Post these emergency numbers near your phone. These veterinarians are open when your local vet is closed.

Tufts Veterinary Hospital in N. Grafton: 508-839-5395

Wachusett Animal Hospital Westminister: 978-407-1122

APCC/Animal Poison Control Center: 1-888-426-4435

**Dangers of having a Xmas tree in the house.  
Keep an eye on your domesticated pet!**



### **Christmas Tree**

If you buy a [real tree](#), skip the tree fertilizer and keep pets from treating the stagnant water as their personal water bowl. Got a climber on your hands? To keep your dog or cat away from the base of the tree, use crumpled-up paper, a plastic bottle filled with beans or anything else that creates noise at the base of the tree. This trick may scare them off or at least warn of their approach in time for you to intervene.

### **Delicate Ornaments**

To protect your pet *and* your valuable family decorations, make sure that small or breakable ornaments are placed higher on the tree. In addition to being a choking and intestinal blockage hazards, shards from broken glass ornaments may potentially injure their little paws and mouths.

**Below is a list of wild animals that pose a threat during the winter months that you should keep an eye out for.**

**Deer** – Similar to rabbits, deer can spread disease through their excrement. While they are not a threat to be consumed by your pet, they do spread diseases, such as Leptospirosis, through their urine. Coming into contact with the urine can put your dog at risk of contracting the dangerous disease. Fortunately, Leptospirosis can be vaccinated against at your local veterinarian.

**Raccoons** – Raccoons are brave animals that often venture into neighborhoods in search of food. Few animals trek through backyards and across rooftops quite like raccoons. Because of their mischievous nature, raccoons tend to get involved with our outdoor pets quite often. Raccoons will not usually seek out a fight, but if they feel cornered they can fight back and cause harm to your pet.

**Rabbits** - Rabbits certainly don't pose the same threats that coyotes do, but they pose their own set of problems. Rabbits spread various diseases that can be contracted by your pet via consumption of the animal's excrement or the animal itself. Various intestinal parasites can come from rabbits if your dog or cat becomes too curious and decides to try and eat the rabbit or what the rabbit left behind. Try to avoid rabbits and rabbit-populated areas if possible and Try and keep them out of your yard when possible.

